

# Cross-border education for pupils of kindergartens and schools: The case of Hong Kong

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*Cross-border education is defined as the movement of people, knowledge, programs, providers, and curriculums across national or regional jurisdictional borders. Each year, millions of students access better education by crossing their national borders from less developed or newly-industrialized countries to Western, industrialised countries. Most are tertiary education students but the numbers engaged in secondary, primary, and pre-school education are also significant.*

*Under the implementation of “one country two systems” in Hong Kong after the transition of sovereignty from Britain to China in 1997, and a decision of a case in The Court of Final Appeal of Hong Kong in 2011, babies born in Hong Kong to mainland Chinese parents are entitled to the right of abode in Hong Kong. Since then, tens of thousands of such births have occurred. More than 20,000 cross-border students travel from China to attend public schools in Hong Kong every day. This paper explores equality issues faced by these students. The paper evaluates the results of various stakeholders working together to solve important issues; for example, dedicated school zones, immigration clearance services, setting up Hong Kong classes in Chinese schools, and language, communication, and cultural support. The paper argues that inequality is prevalent.*

*Keywords: Cross-border education; educational equality; school education*

## INTRODUCTION

International and cross-border student mobility is not a new phenomenon. Tens of thousands of students cross their national borders to other countries or administrative regions for their education. These students migrate between two cultures, two languages, and two nations or regions every day, straining the resources of public-school districts. These students can be found crossing the Mexico-US border, the Malaysia-Singapore border, the Mongolia-China border and the China-Hong Kong border (de la Piedra & Araujo, 2012; Leung, 2012).

Each day, 28,000 Hong Kong-born students living in mainland China cross the Shenzhen (China)-Hong Kong border, one of the busiest borders in the world, to attend school or pre-school. This number has increased 120% in the last few years and is projected to continue to rise in coming years. The issues of cross-border/cross-boundary students

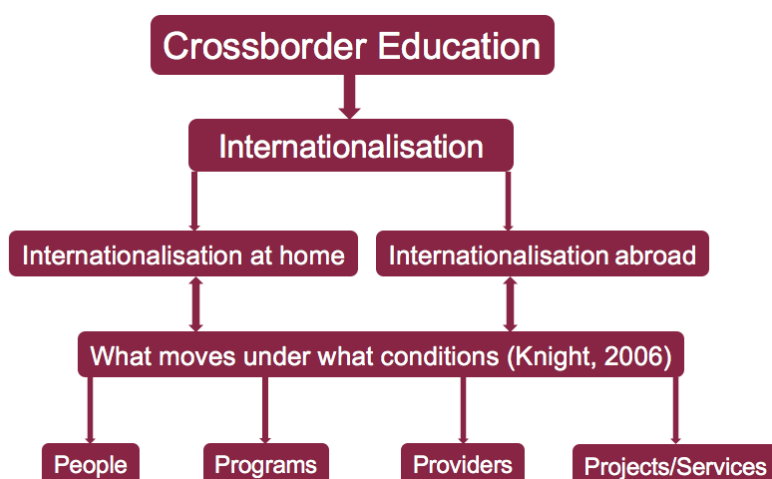
(CBS) are complex and include: dedicated school zones; CBS immigration clearance services; CBS transportation; CBS safety issues on roads; setting up Hong Kong classes in Chinese schools; language, communication, and cultural support; and family support services. Policy makers and various stakeholders have expended considerable effort to address the issues in the last ten years; some issues have been eliminated, some remain, and some new ones have arisen.

This paper discusses the issues. It begins by discussing the concept of “cross-border” education, then introduces Knight’s framework, which is adopted for use in a study of the issues reported in this paper. The methodology is discussed before the impact of CBS on various stakeholders is examined and possible solutions for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government proposed. Finally, the key points of the argument are summarized with concluding remarks.

### **“CROSS-BORDER” EDUCATION**

Scholars use terms such as “transnational”, “cross-border”, “offshore”, and “borderless” education interchangeably to describe the concept of education across borders (Knight, 2006). I will limit myself to the term cross-border education, meaning it to refer to the movement of students, programs, providers, curriculums, projects, research, and services in the education sector across national jurisdictional boundaries (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) & World Bank, 2007). Knight (2006) describes cross-border education as a complex issue and emphasises its historical processes. In doing so, she develops a framework based on “what moves” and “under what conditions” to conceptualize cross-border education. In the context of globalization, it is interesting to examine the processes of why, how, and where education moves across borders (Knight, 2006). In this article, I first briefly address the historical roots of cross-border education and illustrate the relationship between globalization, internationalization, and cross-border education. Then I trace out—as Knight frames—“what moves” under “what conditions” from one country to another so as to conceptualize cross-border education.

Figure 1 summarizes a conceptualization of cross-border education.



**Figure 1: A conceptualisation of cross-border education**

Industrialization helped to move education from the elite to the masses and then to universal access by the masses in the Western world (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rummbley, 2010). Globalization has then added an international dimension to education (Knight, 2006). Post World War II, the forces of globalization have facilitated an increase in student enrolments worldwide (Altbach et al., 2010), with a trend towards the internationalization of education occurring especially since the mid-1980s due to global economic forces; that is, as Knight (2005) states, the knowledge society and market economy are increasing the demand for tertiary and continuing education. This is leading to increased cross-border education provisions involving new types of education providers, new modes of delivery, new programs and qualifications, new partnerships, and new affiliation modes. For example, the HKSAR Government and Chinese local governments work together to provide better arrangements for the CBS, such as setting up Hong Kong (HK)-based curriculum classes in Chinese schools in mainland China. In effect, a mutual relationship has developed between globalization and internationalization: internationalization has shaped the notion of globalization on the one hand and has been an agent of globalization on the other hand (Knight, 2006).

Internationalization of education refers to “the multiple activities, programs, and services that fall within international studies, international educational exchange, and technical cooperation” (Arum & van de Water, 1992, p. 202). Internationalization is generally defined in two ways: “internationalization at home” and “internationalization abroad”. “Internationalization at home” consists of strategies and techniques designed to incorporate an international dimension in local campus experiences; “internationalization abroad” refers to sending students to study abroad, establishing overseas branches of a university or developing collaborative programs (Altbach et al., 2010). The approach of internationalization of education, then, embraces the notion of cross-border education, which can be conceptualized as a subset of educational internationalization (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] & World Bank, 2007).

Knight (2006, p. 358) proposes four categories: people, programs, providers, and projects/services, to classify “who/what” moves across borders. The first category, people, refers to the movements of students, professors, scholars and experts from one country to another. Students move across borders to attain a degree or participate in a study abroad program, undertake fieldwork, a course or an internship, or enrol in a semester- or year-long program. These movements are self-funded, home country fellowships or host country awards, exchange agreements, and private sources. The global flow of academics, scholars and expertise from low salary and/or limited research resources countries to high salary and/or rich research resources countries has increased because of cross-border education. The academic talent from developing countries is mostly moving to North America, western Europe, and Australasia because these regions offer better salaries and work environments (Altbach et al., 2010).

Alongside the physical movement of students, academics, and expertise from one country to another, cross-border education has expanded with the increased mobility of educational programs and institutions (Altbach et al., 2010). In the last decade, the numbers of international programs, which Knight identifies as the second category, have also increased. These programs can be delivered face-to-face, by distance mode, or both ways (Knight, 2006). Often, collaborative programs are developed between different, reputable universities.

The third category, providers, speaks to the physical or virtual movements of the educational providers or institutions across borders (Knight, 2006). Over the years, some universities have set up fully fledged university campuses in other countries, in addition to, and in partnership with, their existing universities. For example, New York University established its “sister” university in Abu Dhabi (Altbach et al., 2010, p. 25). Many universities are recruiting international faculties and international students, and are incorporating international and contemporary perspectives in their curriculums. By these means, higher education is becoming a part of international business to earn foreign revenue for the host countries (Universities Australia, 2016).

The fourth category, projects/services, deals with the movement of a wide range of education-related projects and services across borders. These activities include multifaceted initiatives, such as curriculum development, research and benchmarking, technical assistance, e-learning, and professional and capacity building programs. Often, the projects and services are initiated as development aids by the government, educational institutions and international organizations (Knight, 2006).

As stated in the introduction above, I adopt Knight’s (2005) framework of cross-border education in this paper. Knight’s model recognizes the processes of cross-border education on a global scale to identify what moves under what conditions in the education sector across borders. More importantly, her framework acknowledges that global economic forces have been leading the internationalization of education. Such global economic forces contribute to the increased mobility of students and faculty, programs, institutions and projects across borders. Utilizing this framework, I examine the processes of cross-border education, including why and how education moves, between China and HK.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this paper, I use a mixed method design, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to derive results. That is, results are triangulated and assessed for convergence (O’Toole & Beckett, 2010). The qualitative component of my study involved a case study of young students from China attending public schools in HK, which describes as a particular facet of cross-border education. According to Merriam (1988, p. 16) a “case study can be defined as an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit. Case studies are particularistic, descriptive and heuristic and rely heavily on inductive reasoning in handling multiple data sources”. A case study is a holistic view of a particular event in context and provides a way to take important personal, social, and cultural phenomena into account (Johnson, 1993).

The quantitative components of my study involved the collection and analysis of statistical data from government sources and other documents. In social research, documentary research techniques can be used to help categorize, investigate, interpret, and identify the limitations of physical sources (Payne & Payne, 2004). This method is essentially concerned with the problems of selection and evaluation of evidence (Bell, 2005). It is a supplement to conventional social surveys, in-depth interviews or participant observation, but it is seldom the main or principal research method (Mogalakwe, 2006).

Specifically, I analysed a data published in *The Legislative Council, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region* (HKSAR) (2013–2017) and *Hong Kong Monthly Digest of Statistics* (2013–2017), all published by the Census and Statistics Department, HKSAR.

The data included numbers of babies born to mainland China mothers in HK between 2001 and 2012, the numbers of cross-border students between 2004 and 2016, as well as the annual change of cross-border students in percentage between 2004 and 2016. These data provide information on the scope of educational provisions in public schools in HK for this group of students. Results from an analysis of these data is summarized in Figures 2, 3, and 4. Other government documents were analysed to gain insights into the cross-border education of young children in Hong Kong in the recent past to check the reliability of evidence gathered from the statistical data, including Legislative Council and court case documents (Johnson, 1984), all collected from government websites. In developing a model for analysis, I recorded answers to a series of questions formulated by Scott (1990).

## HONG KONG CONTEXT

Over the last 150 years, HK developed from a little-known farming and fishing village into a world-leading finance centre, and spectacular, cosmopolitan metropolis (Tsang, 2007). HK's economy and education developed rapidly in response to the city's growth.<sup>1</sup> Hong Kong is now one of top performing economies in OECD's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) (OECD, 2003, 2010). Since the 1950s, many Chinese families migrated to HK to find better life opportunities and education for their children. In 1997, the sovereignty of HK was returned to China after 150 years of British administration. The issue of cross-border students has subsequently become more prevalent.

A case in The Court of Final Appeal of Hong Kong in 2001 (*Director of Immigration v Master Chong Fung Yuen*)<sup>2</sup> confirmed that Chinese citizens born in HK enjoy the right to live there regardless of the HK immigration status of their parents (The Court of Final Appeal of Hong Kong, 2001). In other words, babies born in HK to mainland Chinese women are entitled to the right to live in HK. A large number of pregnant mainland Chinese women travelled to HK to give birth there and to secure their children's right of residence. The number of children, like Master Chong Fung Yuen, who were born in HK increased more than fivefold from 7,810 (16.2% of total live births) in 2001 to 43,982 (46.1% of total live births) in 2011 (LegCo, 2013a) (see Figure 2).

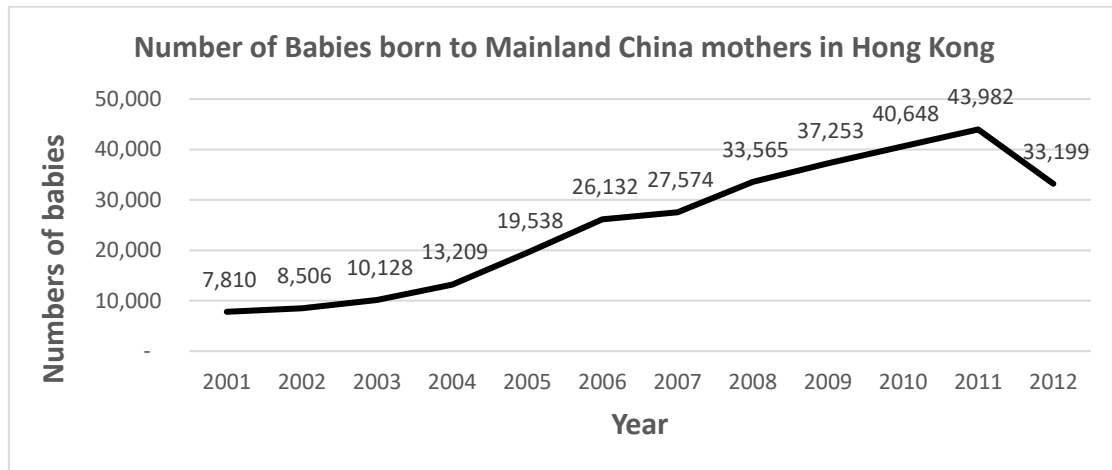
Unsurprisingly, the rise in demand for medical services in HK caused a lot of problems, including that local pregnant women could not secure hospital beds to deliver their babies. Since 2011, when 43,982 births to non-local women were recorded, the HK Government

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<sup>1</sup> For more details about Hong Kong's education system refer to Murad, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Master Chong Fung Yuen's parents are both Chinese citizens who were married in mainland China. He is a Chinese citizen born in HK on 29 September 1997 (after the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region (HKSAR) on 1 July 1997) when his parents came to HK on a tourist visa (namely a two-way permit) on a visit. His parents were then lawfully in HK. But neither his father nor his mother (i) was settled in HK or (ii) had the right of live in HK at the time of his birth or subsequently. His parents were given extensions of stay until 24 November 1997. Thereafter, they became overstayers. They were located by authorities and returned to the mainland. Chong has been given extensions of stay pending the resolution of proceedings. Chong claimed to be a permanent resident of the HKSAR, and to have the right to live there pursuant to BL 24(2)(1), which, when considered in the light of its context and purpose, clearly states that Chinese citizens born in HK before or after 1 July 1997 have the status of permanent residents. The meaning is not ambiguous. Detailed case information can be found at: <http://www.doj.gov.hk/eng/public/basiclaw/basic2-22.pdf>

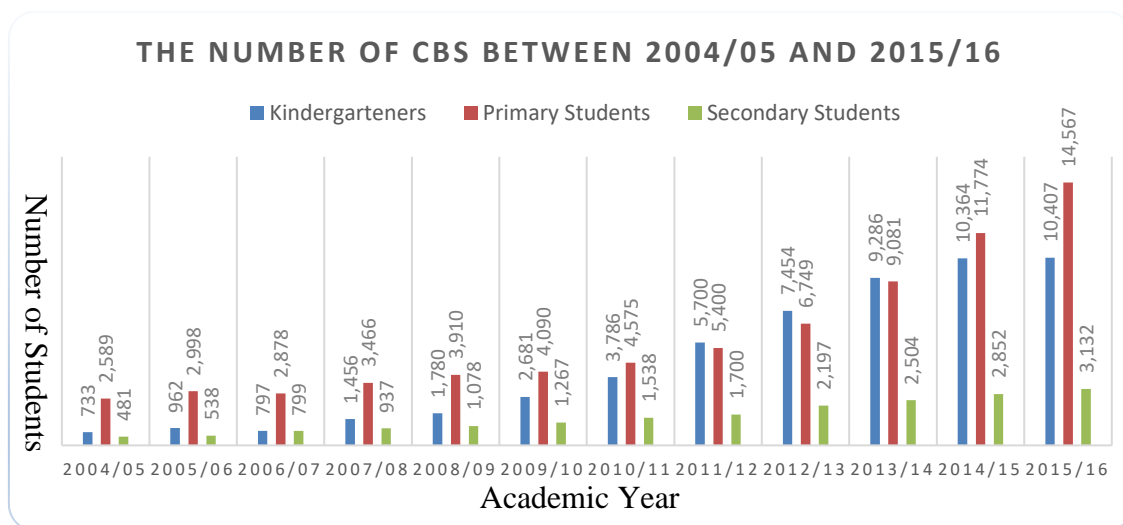
placed restrictions on the number of non-local pregnant women who could give birth in HK, and the number declined to 33,199 in 2012. From 2013, non-local pregnant women giving birth in HK has been forbidden (LegCo, 2013a). Therefore, the demand for public sector, primary one, school places by CBS is expected to decline gradually. The Education Department of HKSAR expects that the CBS problems will be relieved after the academic year of 2017/18.



**Figure 2: The number of babies born to mainland Chinese mothers in Hong Kong between 2001 and 2012**

Source: LegCo (2013a)

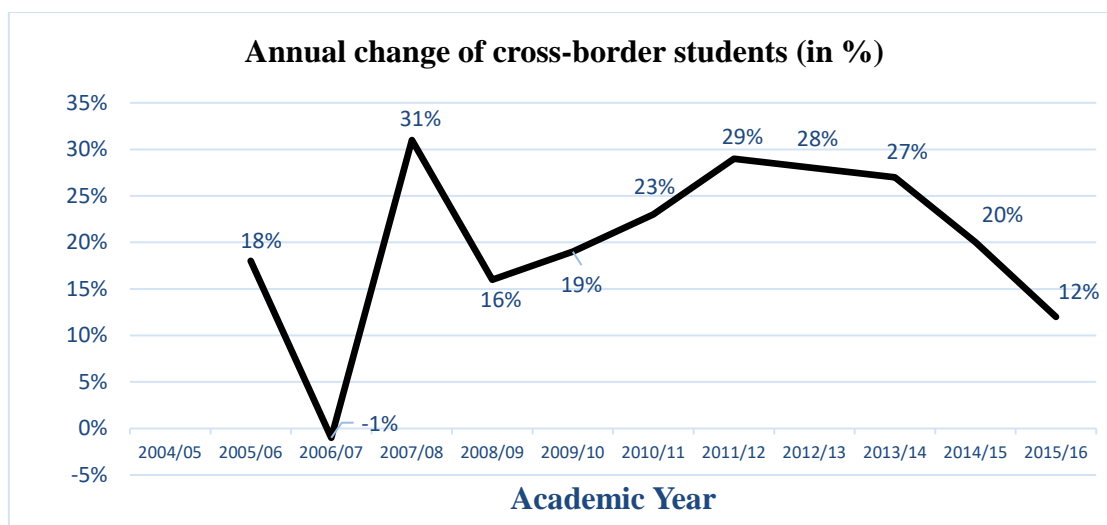
The babies born to non-local parents have grown up and now study in HK but live in Shenzhen, mainland China. They cross at the six border control points (Lo Wu, Lok Ma Chau, Lok Ma Chau Spur Line, Man Kam To, Sha Tau Kok, and Shenzhen Bay) each school day to attend HK schools, which are mostly located in the North District of HK, particularly Taipo, Yuen Long and Tuen Mun Districts. Figure 3 shows the number of CBS in three categories (kindergarten, primary, and secondary students) between 2004/05 and 2012/13. During these periods, the total number of students grew from 3,803 in 2004/05 to 28,106 in 2015/16. The kindergarten, primary students, and secondary students increased 14.2 times, 5.6 times and 6.5 times respectively.



**Figure 3: The number of cross-border students between 2004/05 and 2015/16**

Source: (LegCo, 2016b; Leung, 2012; K. Y. Li, 2013). NB: The academic year is from September to July.

More importantly, the percentage annual growth of student numbers between 2005/06 and 2015/16 is close to an average of 20% (see Figure 4). All three sectors (kindergarten, primary and secondary) show considerable growth. However, from 2011/12 the annual growth began to decline.



**Figure 4: The annual change of the cross-border students between 2004/05 and 2015/16**

Source: (Leung, 2012; K. Y. Li, 2013). NB: academic year is from September to July the following year.

Most CBS parents are keen to send their children back to HK to enjoy 12 years of free education: three years early childhood education, six years primary education, and three years of junior secondary education. They believe their children will benefit on many fronts from receiving an education that cannot be provided in China, including: open and equitable teacher-student relations; an English-language learning environment; small class sizes; and an international learning perspective (Yuen, 2017). The strong push factor for these parents is that the Chinese government does not provide public education to these CBS, who are without *Hukou*. *Hukou* is a household registration system at the town or city level in China. Originally, this system was one of the major tools of social control employed by the state to limit population mobility within China (Chan & Zhang, 1999). Therefore, *Hukou* is an important possession nowadays that recognizes people's identity and enables access to local benefits. Without *Hukou*, CBS parents are required to pay the expensive tuition fees of private schools in China.

## IMPACTS, SOLUTIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Accommodating these 28,000 CBS in HK is not an easy task: no individual school district in HK can hope to accommodate all these students. The daily impact on immigrant clearance services, transportation, and travel safety are also major concerns.

### Dedicated school zones

The HK Education Bureau (EDB) anticipates the demand for public sector, primary one (P1), school places will surge temporarily to reach its peak in the 2018/19 school year. To alleviate the problem of tight supply of primary one school places in the North District as a result of increasing cross-border students, the EDB announced a new arrangement of Central Allocation under the Primary One Admission system. From 2014/15 onwards, applicants residing on the mainland are provided with an additional "Choice of Schools List for Central Allocation" for selection by CBS (LegCo, 2015). The list consists of all

schools in the eight school districts, including Tuen Mun West, Tuen Mun East, Tin Shui Wai, Yuen Long East, Sheung Shui, Fanling, Sha Tau Kok and Tai Po. Individual schools in these other districts are ready and willing to support CBS.

The new arrangements are similar to providing a “dedicated school zone” for the CBS with a view to diverting them to other districts, hence alleviating the excessive demand for P1 school places in districts close to the HK-Shenzhen border, such as the North District. It also helps meet the demand from local children while upholding the rights of cross-boundary applicant children.

CBS parents aim to send their children to the school zone which is closest to the HK-Shenzhen border to save transportation time and energy. Therefore, the Northern District School Zone is the first preference. Constructing many new schools to meet this enormous demand is a long-term solution—and direct competition with local parents is unavoidable. Many local parents are unable to secure places for their children in their local schools in the Northern District. It is inconvenient for them to send their children to schools in other districts, so they are reluctant to do so. It is also against government policy to allow the children to stay at their neighbouring schools. HK parents feel angry and so they protest because they are forced to queue for days and nights outside schools to collect the application forms (Chan & Kao, 2013). One angry mother quit her job to concentrate on getting a place for her son. She had slept overnight at two kindergartens. She expressed her frustration, saying “When I was pregnant, I had to compete with the mainlanders for a hospital bed. Then it was baby powder. Now, it’s school places. This is so unfair to local parents” (Siu, 2013, para 4). HK parents set up a mothers’ group (named *Sheung Shui – Fanling Mama* group) to make their complaints heard about long queues outside kindergartens.

The CBS will face long travel times and safety issues when they are relocated to the districts which are far from the border. These issues will be discussed in the next section. The EDB reminds and encourages the parents concerned to choose suitable schools which are near to their residence for their children, especially those of tender age at kindergarten and primary school levels. If their children have to cross the border to attend schools in HK, they should personally accompany their children on the way to and from school or arrange for other adults to do so. If such an arrangement cannot be made, they should choose a suitable mode of transport, such as cross-border school coaches or other public transport services.

Tu (2013) reports the results of a survey by the International Social Service Hong Kong Branch in August, noting that 70% of CBS parents did not agree with the dedicated school zone initiative. The parents argued that current CBS already get up very early to travel an hour to their schools. Tiredness impacts on the effectiveness of their study. If future CBS are allocated to the school zones further from the border, parents claim it would be impossible for them because they would spend three or four hours daily travelling between home and school. Some parents indicated that they would not let their children study in a HK school if they are allocated to these school zones.

### **CBS immigration clearance services**

Clearly, travelling 1.5 to 2 hours each way to school and back to home is tiring for CBS, especially kindergarten and primary school students. Without providing speedy and safe immigration clearance, CBS are competing with more than half a million other HK citizens and visitors who pass through the six Boundary Control Points (BCP) each day.



In order to cope with the increasing demand for immigration services for CBS, the Immigration Department makes available designated CBS counters at BCP during CBS peak hours before and after school to expedite the processing of CBS immigration clearance (The Immigration Department HKSAR, 2014). The Immigration Department, the Customs and Excise Department and the Department of Health have also put in place various facilitating measures for CBS, which include:

- (1) Providing CBS e-Channel services at the Control Points;
- (2) Implementing a “Simplified Clearance Procedure” to shorten the time for immigration clearance for CBS; and
- (3) Providing “On-board Clearance” services for CBS taking cross-border school coaches under special quotas at the Control Points where officers from these three departments will provide clearance services for CBS on board such coaches.

### **CBS transportation**

In 2008, the HK Government, the Guangdong Provincial Government, and the Shenzhen Municipal Government signed an agreement to issue special quotas for cross-border school coaches to pick up CBS at the four BCP. All these governments review the demands for these special services annually. For instance, the special quotas for cross-boundary school coaches have been increased from 170 in the 2014/15 school year to 220 in the 2015/16 school year, representing an increase of about 30% (LegCo, 2016a).

Using public transportation to schools may cause lengthy travel times, especially in bad weather (Zhao, 2013a). In addition, HK school buses cannot pick up CBS at the border control points because of border control security policies. The implementation of cross-border school coach services may reduce this problem (LegCo, 2013c).

### **CBS safety issues on roads**

When travelling without the company of their parents or teachers, CBS have been exposed to safety issues. Firstly, due to limited pick-up/drop-off points at some border control points, CBS may need to get on or off the cross-border school coaches in crowded areas. This exposes them to the dangers of traffic accidents and kidnap. In addition, CBS are used as smuggling tools. Customs officials intercepted 10 cases where CBS (especially primary students) were used to smuggle smart phones and expensive food ingredients into mainland China (Li, 2013; Wong, 2012).

To prevent the smugglers from exploiting students for cross-border smuggling, government departments, cross-border coach operators, schools, and parents work together to protect these students and educate them to abide by the laws. The Education Bureau (EDB) has formulated safety guidelines and points to note in which coach operators providing school bus services for CBS are required to remind escorts and parents/guardians not to instigate and exploit CBS to engage in smuggling activities. The guidelines also set out clearly the relevant ordinances, criminal liabilities, and reporting hotlines as a deterrent. The HK Customs and Excise Department has stepped up publicity, education and enforcement at BCPs, including setting up signage for clearance of CBS at customs halls and increasing spot checks on CBS and their escorts. When conducting a clearance, the officers often remind students to keep a watchful eye on their personal belongings in order to prevent smugglers from exploiting them for smuggling prohibited and controlled items (LegCo, 2014).

### **Setting up HK classes in Chinese schools**

As already noted, it is more expensive to send children to private schools in Shenzhen than to public schools in HK because CBS do not have Hukou and, therefore, are not entitled to public education in local government schools in China (Wong, 2001). It is proposed that the HK Government should build and run some government schools in China (Takungpao, 2013). Under the principal of “one country two systems”, the establishment of HK schools in Chinese territories would have involved high costs and complicated arrangements (Wong, 2001). However, this situation of creating HK classes with a HK curriculum in Shenzhen schools became possible after a series of negotiations between the two governments in 2010.

In 2013, the EDB and the Shenzhen EDB signed the “Co-operation Agreement on Operating Classes for Hong Kong Students in Shenzhen Schools” to admit CBS to form classes for HK students in the Chinese local school in Shenzhen (HKSAR, 2013). This arrangement provides more HK children residing in Shenzhen with the option of pursuing their studies in Shenzhen instead of travelling across the border for schooling (Zhao, 2017). The number of schools offering HK primary school curriculum to Hong Kong students residing in Shenzhen increased from nine in the 2014/15 school year to 11 in the 2015/16 school year. Eligible primary six students can join the HK Secondary School Places Allocation System and be allocated subsidized secondary one places in HK schools. It is a way to facilitate HK children to receive education on the mainland and to transit into the education system of HK as early as possible. However, when compared with the 28,000 CBS travelling to HK, the provision of spaces in these schools has a very limited effect. Therefore, other options need to be considered.

Some private schools, like Luohu School for Hong Kong Children and Shenzhen Oriental Hong Kong Children’s School, are operated under a self-financing mode. The HK Government does not provide subsidies of any kind to them. Under the prevailing policy, government subsidies provided to schools are restricted to those within HK. The suggestion of buying places from such schools in Shenzhen involves the policy of welfare portability, which has far-reaching implications. Thorough and in-depth studies are required before this move can be made.

### **Language, communication, and cultural support**

Language is another barrier for CBS and their parents. Language differences result in communication difficulty since many of the CBS are more fluent in Mandarin than Cantonese (the local language in Hong Kong). Thus, it is harder for them to connect with local students and teachers. They find English difficult and traditional Chinese writing hard to learn (Yuen, 2010). A large-scale survey conducted by the International Social Service Hong Kong Branch reports that “80 percent of respondents [Hong Kong teachers] perceived that it is more difficult to teach cross-border students, with more than half contending that the English proficiency of students is low. Another 42 percent of respondents complained that the parents of cross-border students could not give guidance in their children's studies” (Fan, 2012, para 2).

Also, because of the limited communication with schools and the cultural barrier between the two regions, CBS parents know very little about their children studying in Hong Kong, nor are they really familiar with HK itself (Yuen, 2010). Without full knowledge about the school system of HK, CBS parents play a passive role in their children’s education in Hong Kong (Yuen, 2012). When added to their low English proficiency, many of these

parents cannot efficiently help with their children's homework. CBS parents who arrange private English tuition for their children face significant financial pressure.

More resources are required by school principals to cater for the needs of CBS, especially in language support and family issues (Zhao, 2013b). Currently, the schools can apply the School-Base Support Grant to support CBS learning, such as through the provision of supplementary English classes (Yuen, 2012). Hong Kong teachers have difficulty reaching the CBS parents to discuss their children's education because the parents live in China and cannot enter HK without a visa. The situation with CBS puts a massive workload and more pressure on teachers. In addition to their normal teaching duties, teachers would benefit from more professional development on cultural awareness and sensitivity concerning the circumstances of the CBS and their families.

### **Other family support services**

For many reasons, HK teachers are unlikely to conduct home visits in order to understand the CBS living environment and family situations. One of the major reasons is the language barrier for teachers communicating with CBS and their parents whose mother tongue is Mandarin. Another reason is that the homes of CBS are scattered throughout the districts in Shenzhen and far away from schools. It may be that CBS have limited support from relatives and friends if the CBS families are from other provinces in China. This may cause psychological impacts for CBS (Law, 2007).

The HK Government could consider funding and encouraging more Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and schools to introduce support programs to CBS families. For example, The Shenzhen Luohu Cross-border Students Service Centre was organized jointly by the International Social Service Hong Kong Branch and the Luohu District Women's Federation, partly funded by the Community Chest of Hong Kong. This service centre provides diversified and tailor-make programs for CBS and their parents. HK schools could expend more effort and attention on the CBS as well as their parents. One way might be for school meetings to be held in Shenzhen, rather than HK for the sake of the mainland mothers. Or more mainland schools could introduce the HK education system (Wong, 2001).

### **CONCLUSION**

The growth of CBS has impacted a diverse range of stakeholders, including HK schools, HK parents and their children, and CBS parents and their children. However, different stakeholders have put considerable effort into tackling various CBS issues by implementing dedicated school zones, speedy and safe immigration clearance services, cross-border school coach services, language improvement programs, and family support services.

Since non-local pregnant women giving birth in HK have been disallowed from 2013, the demand for public sector, primary one school places by cross-border students is expected to gradually decline. The HK government expects the CBS problems will be relieved after the academic year of 2017/18. More research will need to be conducted to follow the trends. More importantly, education equality should be addressed with regard to the CBS students because they are HK citizens, although their parents are not. Consequently, additional support should be made available to them.

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